(c) the steps taken to prevent any further increase in coffee prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The coffee price realised is a function of demand and supply. Moreover, the domestic prices of coffee have started declining and at present these are mostly at par with the international prices.

Import of wheat

2195. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what was the quantity of wheat initially proposed to be imported with details of exporting countries;

(b) the quantity that has been received so far with names of countries who exported this wheat;

(c) whether Government have a comfortable stock of procured and imported wheat;

(d) if so, whether Government propose to change its decision for import of the balance quantity of wheat; and

(e) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Govt. had initially authorised import of upto 2 million tonnes of wheat during 1996-97. Against this, the State Trading Corporation of India contracted for import of a total quantity of 17.51 lakh tonnes of wheat from Australia, Canada and Argentina. The entire quantity of 17.51 lakh tonnes has already reached India by May, 1997.

(c) to (e) The wheat stocks in the Central Pool as on 1-7-97 is estimated at 10.97 million tonnes as against 13.10 million tonnes required to be maintained as per the Buffer Stocking Norms. Govt. has, after considering the relevant factors authorised import of an additional quantity of upto 2 million tonnes of wheat during 1997-98, of which the STC has finalised contract for import of 1 million tonnes in the first instance. Government costantly reviews the stock position of foodgrains in the Central Pool with reference to production of foodgrains in the country, the procurement trend, internal availability of foodgrains, requirement for Public Distribution System (PDS), foreign exchange resources, price trend in the national and International markets etc. and decision regarding import or otherwise of the balance quantity will be taken at the appropriate time depending upon the situation.

Surplus stock of Tabacco in the West and East Godavari Districts

2196. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA SWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Tobacco Board has made any survey of surplus stocks of tobacco in West and East Godavari Districts in the first week of June, 1997;

(b) if so, the findings thereof;

(c) the steps proposed to assist farmers by lifting such tobacco stocks; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Some of the steps taken by the Tobacco Board to assist tobacco farmers include:—

(i) Conducting auctions to ensure accurate weighment, classification and competitive prices;

(ii) Negotiating with tobacco trade for fixation of Mininmum Guaranteed Price for Flue Curred Virginia To-

bacco which is normally above the Minimum Support Price;

(iii) Opening 3 additional auction platforms in Andhra Pradesh at Vellampalli, Podili and Kandukur.

Quasi-Judicial Authority to probe the charges of dumping newsprint from USA, Canada and Russai

2197. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an independent Quasi-Judicial Authority was set up by Government to probe the charges of dumping newsprint from USA, Canda and Russia at Prices far below the prices prevailing in their home markets;

(b) whether the Designated Authority has recommended imposition of provisional anti-dumping duty as per the established practice;

(c) whether the Designated Authority after the through enquiry as per the required procedure confirmed the charges of dumpings; and

(d) if so, when the recommendations were made and the action taken by the Government so far on the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BALLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) to (d) The Designated Authority appointed under the Anti Dumping Act and the Rules made thereunder, is conducting investigations into the existence, degree and effect of alleged dumping of newsprint from USA, Canada and Russia. The Designated Authority has notified preliminary findings recommending imposition of provisional anti-dumping duties and the investigations are continuing. The findings were sent to Ministry of Finance on 11-6-1997 to take a view on the recommendations for imposition of provisional anti dumping duties.

Export of poor quality of Basmati

2198. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any complaint from European Unions about the poor quality of Basmati parboiled exports and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is a fact that European Union import norms are increasingly being dictated by US Lobbies intending to keep Indian exporters out of competition from their EU markets; and

(c) whether Government have taken up the matter with the European Union, and if so, with what result?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) The European Commission has requested the Government of India to ensure that the quality of Indian basmati rice be maintained as some poor quality parboiled rice has been coming in the European Union market.

(b) and (c) The European Commission has introduced a cumulative recovery system, for a trial period of 1 year i.e. from 01.07.1997, for determining certain import duties on rice as a consequence of an agreement reached with the Government of United States of America in the form of exchange of letters on cereals and rice. India has made its position known to the European Union through the diplomatic channelss.

Review of export strategy

2199. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

SHRI GRUFRAN AZAM:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ASSOCHAM has urged Government to review export strategy and evolve plans to boost exports:

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether Government propose to diversify exports to many new markets in